The Influence of Societal Decadence among Out of School Children in Borno State: Causes, Social Implications and Solutions

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Abstract

This study determined the influence of societal decadence among out of school children in Borno State: causes social implications and way forward. Five (5) objectives were formulated to guide the study, five (5) research questions were answered. The study used survey research design. The population of the study was one thousand three hundred and ninety-two (1,392) consist of teachers, parents, community leaders and government agencies. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of three hundred and sixty-one (361) respondents across the three (3) senatorial districts of the state. This sample size is in consonance with Taro Yamane sample size formula. A fifty (50) item questionnaire developed by the researchers was used for data collection. The instrument had validity index of 0.74 and reliability of Cronbach's Alpha value of .846 for the instrument. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study showed that inaccessibility to education is the main factor causing moral decay among out of school children, poverty is the leading cause of violence among out of school children with rehabilitation seen as the best solution; gender disparity and limited access to education are the key causes of social inequality affecting out of school of children; loss of traditional values and harmful cultural practices, such as early marriages drive the rise among out of school children; the increase in out of school children contributes to weakening community trust and social cohesion and substance abuse are serious issues among out of school children, driven by poverty, insecurity and low parental supervision. The study concludes that multiple interconnected socio-economic, cultural, and security factors contribute to the rising number of out of school children in the study area. Poverty, corruption, insecurity and gender disparity were identified as major drivers, while moral decay, cultural degradation, and substance abuse further compound the problem. The collapse of family structures, limited access to quality education, and weak institutional responses exacerbate the situation. The study recommends that government, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to strengthen access to quality education through poverty reduction programmes, youth empowerment, and scholarship schemes, efforts should also focus on improving security around schools, promoting culturally sensitive school enrolment campaign drive.

Keywords: *Causes, Children, Decadence, Implication, Societal, Social, and School.*

Introduction

Nigeria has the largest number of out of school children in the world (UNICEF, 2022). It is estimated that one in every five out of school children around the globe is in Nigeria. Even though basic education is legally free and compulsory in the country, about 10.5 million children aged 5 to 14 years are out of school. About 50 percent of these children live in the northern region of Nigeria, known to be severely affected by the Boko Haram Insurgency. In addition, only 61 percent of children between the ages of 6 to 11 years attend primary school regularly (UNICEF, 2022).

Many families struggle to make ends meets, forcing them to prioritize basic needs over education. The cost of living crises has led to an increase in out of school children, with parents unable to afford education expenses. The prolonged insurgency in the state has destroyed schools, displaced families, and disrupted access to education many children have been forced to flee their homes, making it difficult for them to attend school. Another phenomenon peculiar to the northern region of Nigerian is the deep-rooted cultural norms and practices such as early marriages, limit girls access to formal education often leave children to child labour instead of attending formal school (Kolo & Adamu, 2024)

According to Masingi (2017) observed that there has been a high prevalence of moral decay among learners at various levels of the Nigerian educational system and that the most common students' behavior includes stealing, absenteeism in schools, students' deviant acts affects their academic performance and keep many children out of school. Another study by Britwum and Aidoo (2022) found that there is high frequency of school complaint on school immorality which has negatively impact on the student's academic performance. Similarly, Olowuyo, Ramaila and Movuru (2021) stressed that recurrent abscondment from school may not only affect academic performance of students it could also create a serious problems for such individuals in later life if not checked.

Similarly, Moussa, Ndamobissi and Merkiti (2021) found that children who experience any forms of violence are more likely to be out of school, have reduced learning and are less likely to feel safe traveling to and from school. According to Ijiebor and Charles (2018) who reported that school children are exposed to significant high level of various forms of domestic violence. Domestic violence was found to have a significant adverse effect on the learning outcomes of school learners. Folbiyo, Adetayo and Idowu (2012) reported that Boko Haram insurgents killed 43 people when they attacked the Federal Government College Buni Yadi, Gujba Local Government Area, of Yobe State, where some students were burnt alive, school facilities were destroyed and this has led to many victims becoming out of school children. According Warrington and Younger (2020) asserted that many schools lack equal opportunities, despite initiatives for equal opportunities for girls, despite initiatives for equal opportunities policies aimed at empowering girls and teachers eager to address gender inequality to maximize students' potential. Similarly Omojemite (2024) who found that there is complex interplay of institutional, cultural and socio-economic factors necessitating comprehensive interventions to promote gender parity among learners. Gender stereotypes would be reinforced and girls social economic mobility will be restricted if they were expected to prioritize household responsibilities over their education (UNESCO, 2021). Gender disparity and limited access to education are major factors of social inequality among many Nigerian communities, local economic growth and social cohesiveness are jeopardized by gender differences in education, approximately 700,000 children are out of school in Borno State, with about 60% being girls. The female secondary net attendance rate is only 29% compared to the national average of 53%. Girls completion rate for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools are 64.8%, 38.9% and 28.7% respectively, which are lower than those of boys, therefore when girls are denied access to education, communities will lose out on the potential contributions of these young people as future innovators, leaders, and change agents (World Bank, 2018).

Shaheen, Butt and Afzal (2019) highlight the impact of patriarchal culture on the exclusion of the female child from education in northern Nigeria. They argued that societal norms and practices subordinate females by giving them tasks centred on domestic chores and early marriages. The finding also revealed parents plays a fundamental role in guiding and providing

for their children, making their perception about female child education crucial in shaping the types and quality of education the child receives. Similarly, Murtala and Nasiru (2021) reported that cultural gender bias and preferences poverty, ignorance, religious misunderstandings, teenage pregnancy and early marriages among other issues as reasons for the exclusion of females from education in Nigeria. Poor family background, religious exclusion, being handicapped, early pregnancy and marriage, gender driven violence, cultural prejudice, and views towards women and their duties are some of the causes of the girl's childs educational exclusion (Okorie, 2017).

According to Tagi, Siben, Solomon and Abdulafthi (2025) asserted that social cohesion in the north east sub-region is faced with numerous challenges that are triggered by political, cultural, social, religious and structural factors, especially as it relates to trust, inclusion and participation in community development, Valli, and Hidrobo (2019) reported that a cohesive society promotes a sense of belonging and trust. Lack of belongingness can also negatively impact the social protection of the community members, social protection is vital and can also foster social cohesion, the finding also revealed that living in such complex and uncertain situations can create a situation of losing social capital. Social capital is a significant factor in the social life of a person in communities that the mostly agrarians.

Study by Uchendu and Ukonu (2016) found that there is a strong correlation between substances abuse and student academic performance the effect of psychoactive substances had psychiatric morbidity and study difficulty with brain fag syndrome. Also corroborating Ossai (2023) revealed that alcoholic drink including beer were the most abused substances among both the male and female secondary school students other substances includes codeine, kai kai, cigarette, Kola nut, and marijuana which has serious adverse effect on their psychological and social wellbeing.

School and indeed education has multiple benefits to offer to society, the question as to why some children should be identified as out of school children is difficult to accept in the 21st century seeing and in particular, a nation as Nigeria that is endowed with multiple human and material resources. According to the United Nations, out of school children are yet to be enrolled in any formal schools excluding pre-primary education. The definition further sees the age range for out of school children as those between 6-11 years. They are category of young people who are within the age bracket of attending primary or secondary schools but are engaged in learning whether in non-formal education system. These categories of children also include those children living with disabilities that are not engaged in either formal or non-formal educational endeavors (UNESCO, 2023). Globally, according to the UNESCO institute for statistics (2020) for example only 9 percent of out of school children come from wealthy households, whereas that figure tiptoed to 31 percent for children from poor households. In the same vein, only 12 percent of out of school children are settled in urban areas compared to 23 percent of those from rural areas. This is evidence of severe disparities based on households economic standing and geographic location. Out of schools children are pupils who have never been privileged to enroll as students or who chopped out of the system as a result of poor academic records, lack of sponsorship, employment or being disillusioned with the educational system. They are children who leave school without completing their course of study (Amede, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been public outcry on redundancy of school age children parading major streets in urban areas of Borno state hawking or begging for arms at the time that their contemporaries are engaged in school activities, the situation has reach an alarming proportion

and if left unchecked it may propel the out of schools children to indulge in social vices like drug abuse, militancy, thuggery, gangsterism, cultism and other forms of antisocial behavior as they transient in to adolescence. The researchers have also observed that lack of proper sensitization on school enrolment drive campaign, lack of infrastructure, insecurity/conflict, ineffective school climate, distance to school early child marriage, low household income, child labour, sociocultural norms and other factors mitigates children's school enrolment, attendance, retention and completion of their education.

Objective(s) of the Study

The objectives of the study were to determine:

1. Level of moral decay among out of school children in Borno states.

2. Level of violence among out of school children in Borno state

3. Level of social inequality among out of school children in Borno state

4. Cultural degradation among school communities in Borno state

5. Deterioration of social cohesion among school communities in Borno state

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

1. What is the level of moral decay among out of school children in Borno states?
2. What is the Level of violence among out of school children in Borno state?
3. What is the Level of social inequality among out of school children in Borno state?

4. What is the level of Cultural degradation among school communities in Borno state?

6. What is the level of Deterioration in social cohesion among school communities in Borno state?

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on social exclusion theory which was developed by Rene Lenoir, secretary of state for social action in France, who coined the term in the mid-1970s. lenoir's work, "les Exclus: Un franciscur dix" published in 1974, identified about 10% of the French population as excluded, including the poor, handicapped, suicidal people, aged, abused children and substance abusers. Social exclusion theory posits that certain group or individuals are marginalized and excluded from mainstream society denying them access to resources, sociability, recognition and identity. This much dimensional process involves progressive social rapture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions. Social exclusion encompasses various dimensions including economic, social, cultural and political aspects, exclusion is a dynamic process that can change over time, influenced by individual and societal factors. Also emphasizes the importance of social relationship and network in shaping individual experiences social exclusion theory, emphasizes the role of social solidarity in preventing exclusion highlighting the importance of collective values and norms. It is also view as a result of specialization and differentiation in society, leading to unequal access to resources.

The implications of social exclusion theory on societal decadence among out of school children in Borno state. This theory posit that certain groups or individuals are marginalized and excluded from mainstream society, denying them access to resources, sociability, recognition and identity while this study seek to established the relationship between societal decadence

and out of school children considering the fact that many children are out of school due to economic hardship forces many children into labour instead of education, while cultural biases often limit girls' access to schooling, attacks on educational institutions and conflict have led to widespread school closures, disrupting education and causing many children to drop out. Inadequate funding and poor implementation of education policies have resulted in insufficient infrastructure and resources, further exacerbating the issue, and thus has far reaching implications such as increase in crimes and social vices because out of school children are more susceptible to exploration and involvement in crime and social vices large number of out of schools children will lead to a shortage of skilled manpower in the future hindering economic development and technological advancement. Also the problem of out of school children can lead to high illiteracy levels, perpetuating poverty and inequality

Methodology

This study used survey research design. Survey research design enables the researcher to gather information from the sample which is used for generalization, Babbie (2001) opines that survey design aids the examination of hundred and even thousands of respondents and permits evaluation of complex preposition and lends itself to many variables that can be quantified and processed electronically. Shittu (2015) stated that survey design allows researcher to systematically collect data on existing conditions or attitudes of people for purposes of data analysis. Amechi (2018) suggested that when a study involves a population or a sample of respondents from whom information is obtained either verbally or through a questionnaire, the ideal design method to be adopted is the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was one thousand three hundred and ninety two (1,392) consist of teachers, parents, community leaders and government agencies. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtained sample of three hundred and sixty one (361) respondents across the three senatorial districts of the state. This sample size is in consonance with Taro Yamane sample size formula. A-50 item questionnaire developed by the researchers was use for data collection. The instrument was validated by specialists in the Department of Education, Kashim Ibrahim University, Maiduguri. The validity index was 0.72 and reliability of Cronbach's Alpha value of .886 for the instrument was reported. Cronbach's Alpha value was obtained from a pilot study which was conducted in one other state that was not part of the main study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation.

Results

Research question one: What is the level of moral decay among out of school children in Borno states?

The summary of descriptive statistics of the level of moral decay among out of school children in Borno state

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of the level of moral decay among out of school children in Borno state.

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean	SD
1.	Inaccessibility to education is a significant contributor to moral decay among out of school children.	3.98	0.14
2.	Poverty and unemployment among parents contribute to moral decay	3.27	0.48
3.	Out of school children are more likely to engage in criminal activities due to moral decay.	3.09	0.44
4.	Increasing number of out of school children due to moral decay affect social stability.	3.54	0.60
5.	Increasing access to social justice, equity and fairness can reduce moral decay, among out of school children.	3.22	0.49
6.	Community based initiatives can help address moral decay among out of school children.	3.26	0.54
7.	Government policies and programmes on child rights act does not help in addressing moral decay among out school children.	3.36	0.52
8.	Collapse of family institution has contributed to moral decay among out of school children.	3.35	0.54
9.	Societal hopelessness and mistrust has contributed to moral decay among out of school children.	3.39	0.52
10.	Broken home has resulted to moral decay among out school children.	3.33	0.54
	GRAND MEAN	**3.38**	

Table 4.1 presents respondents' perceptions on the influence of moral decay among out-of-school children. The results show that inaccessibility to education was the strongest contributing factor to moral decay (mean = 3.98, SD = 0.14). Other significant factors included societal hopelessness and mistrust (mean = 3.39, SD = 0.52), government policies on child rights (mean = 3.36, SD = 0.52), and collapse of family institution (mean = 3.35, SD = 0.54). The impact on social stability was notably high (mean = 3.54, SD = 0.60), while poverty and unemployment showed moderate contribution (mean = 3.27, SD = 0.48). Respondents moderately agreed that community initiatives (mean = 3.26, SD = 0.54) and improved social justice (mean = 3.22, SD = 0.49) could help address moral decay. The engagement in criminal activities received the lowest mean score among the factors (mean = 3.09, SD = 0.44), though still indicating general agreement with the statement.

Research question two: What is the level of violence among out of school children in Borno state?

The summary of descriptive statistics of the level of violence among out of school children in Borno state

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics of the level of violence among out of school children in Borno state.

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean	SD
1.	Poverty is a significant contributor to violence among out of school children.	3.73	0.51
2.	Lack of education contributes to violence among out of school children.	3.36	0.60
3.	Exposure to violence has a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of out of school children.	2.88	0.55
4.	Adversity of violence keeps many children out of school	3.28	0.66
5.	Social justice and equity can help reduce violence among out of school children	3.31	0.57
6.	Constant mediation and counseling can help reduce violence among out of school children	3.23	0.59
7.	Community intervention initiatives can help address violence among out of school children.	3.17	0.52
8.	Government policies and programme is doing enough to address violence among out of school children.	3.21	0.63
9.	Out of school children are victims of violence as a result of insurgency	3.33	0.65
10.	Rehabilitation of out of school children affected by violence will rekindle their hope.	3.40	0.55
	GRAND MEAN	**3.29**	

Table 4.2 presents respondents' perceptions on the influence of violence among out-of-school children. The results indicate that poverty was identified as the strongest contributor to violence (mean = 3.73, SD = 0.51). Rehabilitation of affected children was seen as the most effective intervention (mean = 3.40, SD = 0.55), followed by addressing insurgency-related violence (mean = 3.33, SD = 0.65) and promoting social justice (mean = 3.31, SD = 0.57). Lack of education was also recognized as a significant factor (mean = 3.36, SD = 0.60). The data shows moderate agreement that government efforts are sufficient (mean = 3.21, SD = 0.63), while mediation and counseling (mean = 3.23, SD = 0.59) and community interventions (mean = 3.17, SD = 0.52) were viewed as somewhat effective. Notably, the impact of violence on mental health received the lowest agreement (mean = 2.88, SD = 0.55), suggesting this aspect may be less recognized among respondents.

Research question three: What is the level of social inequality among out of school children in Borno state?

The summary of descriptive statistics of the level of social inequality among out of school children in Borno state

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of the level of social inequality among out of school children in Borno state.

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean	SD
1.	Gender disparity contributes to the number of out of school children.	3.68	0.53
2.	Socio-economic status affects access to education for children.	3.20	0.51
3.	Cultural and traditional practices contributes to social inequality among out of school children.	3.04	0.61
4.	Geographical location (urban vs rural) affects access to education and social inequality among out of school children.	3.09	0.59
5.	Social inequality perpetuates poverty among parents of out of school of children.	3.18	0.56
6.	Social inequality limits opportunities for out of school children	3.34	0.63
7.	Increasing access to quality education can help reduce social inequality among out of school children.	3.32	0.59
8.	Government proactive measures can help address social inequality and increase access to education for out of school children.	3.29	0.52
9.	Community awareness and mobilization can help address social inequality and promote education for out of school children.	3.35	0.57
10.	Government, NGOs, community leaders can collaborate to address social inequality and increase access to education for out of school children.	3.30	0.59
	GRAND MEAN	**3.28**	

Table 4.3 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of social inequality among out-of-school children. The results show that gender disparity was identified as the strongest contributing factor (mean = 3.68, SD = 0.53). Community awareness and mobilization were viewed as the most effective strategy (mean = 3.35, SD = 0.57), closely followed by the recognition that social inequality limits opportunities for children (mean = 3.34, SD = 0.63). Increasing access to quality education (mean = 3.32, SD = 0.59) and multi-stakeholder collaboration (mean = 3.30, SD = 0.59) were also strongly supported as solutions. Government proactive measures received moderate agreement (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.52), while socio-economic status (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.51) and the poverty-perpetuating effect of inequality (mean = 3.18, SD = 0.56) were acknowledged as significant factors. Cultural practices (mean = 3.04, SD = 0.61) and geographical location (mean = 3.09, SD = 0.59) were seen as comparatively less influential contributors to social inequality in education.

Research question four: What is the Level of cultural degradation among school communities in Borno state?

The summary of descriptive statistics of the level of cultural degradation among school communities in Borno state

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of the level of cultural degradation among school communities in Borno state.

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean	SD
1.	Loss of traditional and cultural values has contributed to the increase in out of school children.	3.73	0.58
2.	Certain cultural practices such as early marriage, and child labour affects children's access to education.	3.28	0.45
3.	Cultural values prioritize education.	3.15	0.48
4.	Cultural degradation has a negative impact on the social and emotional development of out of school children.	3.18	0.59
5.	Cultural degradation increases the vulnerability of out of school children to exploitation and abuse.	3.37	0.58
6.	Culturally sensitive educational programme can help increase access to education for out of school children.	3.44	0.56
7.	Collapsed of family institution has contributed to the washing away of moral values in society.	3.29	0.55
8.	Adoption of western values and practices has contributed to cultural degradation in our society.	3.31	0.56
9.	Exposure to violent or explicit content in media has contributed to cultural degradation.	3.32	0.59
10.	Decline of moral values such as honesty integrity and inspect for others has contributed to cultural degradation.	3.20	0.52
	GRAND MEAN	**3.33**	

Table 4.4 presents respondents' perceptions on the influence of cultural degradation among school communities. The results show that the loss of traditional and cultural values was strongly identified as a contributing factor to increasing out-of-school children (mean = 3.73, SD = 0.58). Culturally sensitive educational programs were viewed as the most effective intervention (mean = 3.44, SD = 0.56), while cultural degradation's role in increasing vulnerability to exploitation and abuse was also widely acknowledged (mean = 3.37, SD = 0.58). Exposure to negative media content (mean = 3.32, SD = 0.59) and adoption of Western values (mean = 3.31, SD = 0.56) were seen as significant contributors to cultural degradation. The collapse of family institutions (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.55) and harmful cultural practices like early marriage (mean = 3.28, SD = 0.45) were also recognized as influential factors. Respondents moderately agreed that cultural values prioritize education (mean = 3.15, SD = 0.48), suggesting some preservation of positive cultural attitudes toward schooling.

Research question five: What is the Level of deterioration of social cohesion among school communities in Borno state?

The summary of descriptive statistics of the level of deterioration of social cohesion among school communities in Borno state

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics of the level of deterioration of social cohesion among school communities in Borno state

S/N	STATEMENT	Mean	SD
1.	Increase in out of school children has contributed to the deterioration of social cohesion	3.71	0.70
2.	Education plays a role in promoting social cohesion	3.23	0.56
3.	Poverty and inequality are significant contributors to the deterioration of social cohesion and the increase in out of school children	2.84	0.52
4.	Cultural and religious differences have impacted on social cohesion	3.30	0.67
5.	Deterioration of social cohesion has a negative impact on the well-being of out of school children	3.24	0.62
6.	Deterioration of social cohesion has affected trust among school community members	3.27	0.54
7.	Providing education and vocational training can help promote social cohesion and reduce the number of out of school children	3.27	0.64
8.	Community based initiatives can help promote social cohesion and support out of school children	3.29	0.56
9.	Out of school children may be stigmatized or excluded from social activities	3.22	0.62
10.	Out of school children may be more likely engaged in crime and delinquency, contributing to a decline in social cohesion	3.25	0.65
	GRAND MEAN	**3.26**	

Table 4.5 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of social cohesion among school communities. The results indicate strong agreement that the increase in out-of-school children contributes to the deterioration of social cohesion (mean = 3.71, SD = 0.70). Cultural and religious differences were identified as notable factors impacting social cohesion (mean = 3.30, SD = 0.67). Community-based initiatives were viewed as the most effective approach to promote social cohesion (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.56), while education and vocational training were also recognized as valuable strategies (mean = 3.27, SD = 0.64). Respondents acknowledged that deteriorated social cohesion negatively affects trust within communities (mean = 3.27, SD = 0.54) and the well-being of out-of-school children (mean = 3.24, SD = 0.62). The potential link between out-of-school children and crime received moderate agreement (mean = 3.25, SD = 0.65). Interestingly, poverty and inequality were perceived as the least influential factor among the listed items (mean = 2.84, SD = 0.52).

Discussion of Findings

Finding on what is the level of moral decay among out of school children in Borno State (**research question one**) revealed that inaccessibility to education is a major cause of moral decay among out of school children in Borno State. This finding is consistent with social exclusion theory propounded by Rene Lenoir (1970) who stated that marginalization or exclusion of certain individuals or groups from cultural practices, values and norms often due to differences in ethnicity, language or religion affect individuals psychological and social wellbeing. Similarly, Masingi (2017) reported that there has been a high prevalence of moral decay among learners at various levels of the Nigerian educational system and that the most common students' behaviours disorder include stealing and absenteeism in schools. Student deviant acts affects their academic performance and keep many children out of school. Also Corroborating Britwum and Aidoo (2022) found that there is high frequency of school complaints on schools immorality which has a negative impact on the students' academic performance. Similarly, Olowoyo, Ramaila, and Mavuru (2021) stressed that recurrent

abscondment from school may not only affect academic performance of students, but it could create a problem for such individuals in later life if not checked.

Finding on what is the level of violence among out of school children in Borno State (**research question two**) revealed that poverty is the leading cause of violence among out of school children with rehabilitation seen as the best solution. This finding is in-line with Smiley, Moussa, Ndamobissi and Merkiti (2021) who found that children who experienced any form of violence are more likely to be out of school, have reduced learning and are less likely to feel safe traveling to and from school. According to Ijiebor and Charles (2018) reported that school children are exposed to significant level of various forms of domestic violence. Domestic violence was found to have a significant adverse effect on various outcomes of school learners. In the same vein. Foibiyi, Adetayo and Idawu (2014) reported that Boko Haram insurgents killed 43 people when they attacked the Federal Government College Buni Yadi, Gujba Local Government Area of Yobe State, where some students were burnt alive, school facilities were destroyed and this has led to many victims becoming out of school children.

Finding on what is the level of social inequality among out of school children in Borno State (**Research question three**) revealed that gender disparity and limited access to education are the key causes of social inequality among out of school children. This finding is in-line with Warrington and Younger (2020) who asserted that many schools lack equal opportunities for girls, despite initiatives for equal opportunities policies aimed at empowering girls, and teachers eager to address gender inequality thereby maximizing students' potentials. Similarly, Omojemite (2024), found that there is complex inter play of institutional, cultural and socio economic factors necessitating comprehensive interventions to promote gender parity among learners. Gender stereotypes would be reinforced and girls socio economic mobility would be restricted if they were expected to prioritize household responsibility over their education (UNESCO, 2021). Gender disparity and limited access to education are major factors of social inequality among many Nigerian communities, local economic growth and social cohesiveness are jeopardized by gender differences in education. When girls are denied access to education, community may lose out in the potential contribution of these young people as future innovators, community leaders and change agents (World Bank, 2018).

Finding on what is the level of cultural degradation among school communities in Borno State (**research question four**) revealed that loss of traditional value and harmful cultural practices drive the rise of out of school children. This finding is in line with Shaheen, Butt and Afzal (2019) who revealed the impact of patriarchal culture on the exclusion of the female child from education in northern Nigeria. They are argued that societal norms and practices subordinate female by giving them task center in domestic chores and early marriages. The finding also revealed that parents play a fundamental role in guiding and providing for their children making their perception about female child education crucial in shaping the types and quality of education the child receives. Similarly Murtala and Nasiru (2021) reported that cultural gender bias and preferences, poverty, ignorance, religion, misunderstanding of teenage pregnancy and early marriages among other issues as reasons for the exclusion of female from education in Nigeria. Poor family background, religious exclusion, being handicapped early pregnancy and marriage, gender driven violence, cultural prejudice and views towards women and their children are some of the causes of the girls child's educational exclusion (Okorie, 2017)

Finding on what is the level of deterioration in social cohesion among school communities in Borno State (**research question five**) revealed that increase in out of school children contribute to weakening, trust and social cohesion among school, communities. This finding is in line with Tagi, Siben, Solomon and Abulafthi (2025) who asserted that social cohesion in the northeast sub region of Nigeria, is faced with numerous challenges that are triggered by

political, cultural, social, religious and structural factors especially as it relates to trust inclusion and participation in community development also corroborating Valli and Hidrobo (2019) stated that a cohesive society promote a sense of belonging and trust, lack of belongingness can also negatively impact the social protection of the community members, social protection is vital and can also foster social cohesion, the finding also revealed that living in such complex and uncertain situation can create a situation of losing social capital.

Conclusion

From the findings reported in this study it is evident that multiple interconnected socio economic, cultural and security factors contributed to the rising number of out of school children in the study area. Poverty, insecurity and gender disparity were identified as major issues while moral decay, cultural degradation and substance abuse further compound the problem. The collapse of family institutions, limited access to quality education and weak institutional responses exacerbate the situation although government and community interventions exist, but their efforts remain inadequate to fully address those challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that government, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to strengthen access to quality education through poverty reduction programmes, youth empowerments and scholarship schemes. Efforts should also focus on improving security around school communities, promoting culturally sensitive educational campaigns, drive tend to raise awareness on the dangers of moral decay, and substance abuse and child labour to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

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